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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, December 19, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WARDROBE PREPARATIONS FOR THE HOLIDAYS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

You may think the week before Christmas is too busy a time to talk about clothes. Too much to do about Christmas to bother about the wardrobe just now. But -- have you ever seen a holiday season go by without some sort of family clothing problem coming up? I never have. Sad experience is what brings wardrobe matters to my mind today. And because I belong to the Housewives Protective Union, I'm mentioning clothes to you, hoping perhaps to protect you from some of the last-minute troubles I've had.

Sure as the days fill up with a thousand and one Christmas preparations and you haven't a minute to spare, clothing troubles appear. Maybe you are visiting relatives out of town. You rush around making all arrangements for closing the house, and feeding the canary during your absence, and what not. You wrap and pack presents for everybody. You have the railroad ticket in your purse. At last you heave a sigh of relief. And then you notice a large dark grease spot right in the front of little Marian's best dress! Or you notice how dreadfully shiny your husband's trousers ^{have} become while you've been too busy to look after his clothes.

And clothing troubles can get you when you're staying at home for Christmas, too. The aunts, uncles, and cousins are coming for the day. The tree is trimmed. The house is spick and span. The presents are wrapped and waiting. The goose is in the oven. The plum pudding is steaming cheerfully. Just before the guests come you dash in to slip on your velvet dress ready to be the perfect hostess. And then, alack-a-day, you take a look at that dress. You had forgotten how mussed and creased it is. You had forgotten that flat places showed on the back of the skirt and also at elbows and knees. Well, it's too late to do anything about your dress at this hour. The doorbell is ringing already. So you just have to grin and wear it. But you don't feel quite as happy as you might on this Christmas day.

Well, memories of situations like these remind me always that one good way to prepare for a merry Christmas is to check over the family wardrobe and fix the clothes up before the eleventh hour. So let's talk over some quick and effective ways to prepare clothes for the holidays.

That velvet dress, for example. Steaming is the best home beauty treatment for velvet. Steam takes out the lines and wrinkles and brings back its youthful complexion. You can hang your dress over the spout of a steaming kettle. That's one way to revive it. If you have a shower bath in your home, I suggest the shower room as a convenient place to do the job. Hang the dress on a hanger--way up high where it won't touch anything, where it will hang loose and free.

But hang it far enough away from the shower so that no drops of water splash on it. Steam is all right for velvet, but not water. Well, when you have the dress hanging high, turn on the hot water in the shower until the room is all steamy. Then let the dress dry right in the same position. Never touch velvet while it's damp. That will mar it. Never use an iron on it either.

So much for reviving the velvet dress. Now about the grease spots -- those annoyingly familiar spots to every housekeepers. The points to remember about removing a grease spot successfully are about 3. First, always use a clean absorbent cloth or pad under the spot to catch the dirt as it comes out. Second, apply your cleaning liquid to the wrong side of the garment. Third, use very little solvent at a time and work in from the edge of the spot. To soak a cloth with cleaning liquid, and then apply it to the spot is a sad mistake. That's the cause of many a ring that often looks worse than the original stain. Just dampen your cleaning rag and "feather" it on. Do it again and again, if necessary.

So much for grease spots. Now about the shine on Father's pants. That shine comes from wear and soil. The nap of the wool wears down and soil gets worn in. If the fabric is only slightly soiled, all it needs probably is a good sponging and pressing. Put a drop or two of ammonia in the sponging water. That will help remove the shine. Then press those trousers carefully using a damp cloth, a medium-hot iron, and a well-padded ironing board.

For that matter, a damp cloth, a medium iron, and a well-padded board are the essentials for pressing all wool clothes. A brush and a press will revive many a weary looking wool garment. The thicker the fabric, the heavier the cloth you use for pressing.

But when you're pressing a silk dress, you'll find that paper does better than cloth. Use a sheet of tissue paper over your silk dress. You can dampen the paper or not, depending on how wrinkled the dress is. Sometimes it's a good idea to sponge a bit of water over the paper and then press. Silk treated this way usually comes out with a very fresh new look.

Felt hats are likely to be a bit soiled and weary-looking at this season. Many times a good brushing will help their appearance. If you see a spot here or there, try rubbing it off with a soft rubber eraser. If the spot is stubborn, try a bit of emery paper or very fine steel wool. And then, if the hat needs an all-over cleaning, cover it with warmed cornmeal for the night and give it a good brushing in the morning.

By the way, a stiff brush and fine emery paper or steel wool will help take the spots from suede leather, also. Of course, you know that leather shoes, handbags, coats or hats won't clean by the same methods you use on fabrics. And for suede, friction cleaning is the easiest and most successful.

Well, just a little pressing here and a little steaming there, a quick solvent treatment for the grease spots, a friction clean for the suedes and felts, steam for the velvets, a damp-cloth press for the woolens, and a paper press for the silks -- just a few easy little tricks like that and your clothes are ready for Christmas.

